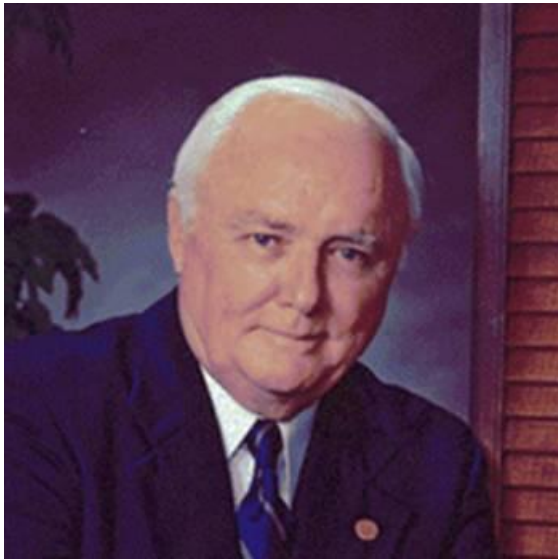


IN MEMORIAM

DR. ROBERT B. ABERNETHY (“Dr. Bob”)



1930 – 2021

Dr. Bob Abernethy, inventor of the Pratt & Whitney J58 engines powering the SR-71 “Blackbird” spy plane, passed away MONDAY 26 JUL 2021 at 91 years old. The unique top-secret Blackbird became famous afterwards when decommissioned after 20+ years of service, finally being revealed to the public in the early 1990’s as the fastest self-powered manned aircraft ever to fly. It still holds that speed record unless we’re all being kept in the dark about a successor craft. The SR-71’s (and so Dr. Bob’s) contribution to national security is nothing short of monumental and greatly responsible for the relative peace during the cold war between United States and Russia. Pratt & Whitney mentioned by name only one engineer in P&W’s First-50-Years retrospective video. That engineer is Dr. Bob. He also became known as the father of Weibull Engineering by developing the first handbook for it and the first training for it (The New Weibull Handbook© self-published, and the Weibull Workshop).

He was a US Navy Scholar and a Fulbright Scholar. He was an ASME Gold Medal recipient. He founded SAE’s G11 Division on Reliability and SAE’s E33 Committee on Aircraft Performance. He was a fellow of SAE, ASME, ASQ, and the Royal Statistical Society as well as an associate fellow of AIAA.

Always available to those with questions, Dr. Bob endeared himself to his co-workers and students with intelligence and humor. Classes from Dr. Bob included enlightenment and entertainment much like dinner and a show. While teaching he mixed in stories appropriately from his time in the U.S. Navy, his time at Pratt & Whitney, his time fishing off the coast of Florida, and his time with prominent technical luminaries he encountered along the way ... like Wernher von Braun, Kelly Johnson, and Waloddi Weibull. No student could ask for a more informative and enjoyable session than the Weibull Workshop he presented. For those in the know, Dr. Bob will be remembered as one of the great technical minds of the 20th century and one of its best teachers.

Wes Fulton – Business partner with Dr. Bob for over 25 years